



**USAID/PADCO ARMENIA SOCIAL TRANSITION
PROGRAM**

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**FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE
ARMENIA SOCIAL TRANSITION
PROGRAM**

JULY 26 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2000

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Prepared by PADCO, Inc.

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A. PROJECT INFORMATION

PADCO Project # 0008

October 25, 2000

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

(I) Project Name:	Armenia Social Transition
(II) Contract No:	111-C-00-00-00114-00
(III) Project Start Date	July 27, 2000
(IV) Anticipated End Date:	July 26, 2003 – with an option period from July 27, 2003 through July 26, 2005
(V) Technical Supervision	Kimberly Delaney, Director, Office of Democracy and Social Reform Marshall Fischer, Social Sector Specialist
(VI) Contract Supervision	Carlton Bennett, Regional Contracting Officer
(VII) Chief of Party	Roger Vaughan

B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The goal of the five-year Armenia Social Transition Program (AST) is, in the short-term, to meet the immediate social and health care needs of the most vulnerable, while establishing the basis in the longer term for sustainable and effective social insurance care systems. USAID has defined social insurance systems to include unemployment, disability, and health and pension systems.

For the purposes of this program, the most vulnerable have been defined as those not able to meet their basic health, nutrition and shelter needs. Categorization of the most vulnerable population is difficult in Armenia, due to the wide extent and transient nature of poverty. The most vulnerable are likely to include extended family households with three or more children.

Under the Armenia Social Transition Program, PADCO, Inc. shall focus on those elements of the program related to establishing the longer-term foundation for social insurance systems, while, in the short-term, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the government in providing social assistance and primary health care and making improvements in publicly provided primary health care in selected regions.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Armenian Entities and Terms

CSR =	Civil Status Registry (records births deaths & marriages, is subordinated to the Ministry of Justice)
GOA =	Government of Armenia
HIEE=	Household Income and Expenditure Survey, conducted annually by the National Statistical Service
MFE =	Ministry of Finance and Economy, responsible for developing overall economic policy, ensuring auditing and reporting standards
MOH =	Ministry of Health
MOJ =	Ministry of Justice, responsible for registering births, deaths and marriages through the CSR
MOSS =	Ministry of Social Security
MSR =	Ministry of State Revenues, responsible for collecting taxes
NA=	National Assembly
Normative acts =	Laws of parliament, decrees of the President, ministerial decrees and instructions, that, together, form the legal and regulatory framework for social protection programs
NSS =	National Statistics Service
PHC =	Primary Health Care
PIN =	Personal Identification Number
RSEL =	Republic Service for Employment and Labor, responsible for administering unemployment insurance benefits and providing job and training information -- subordinated to the MOSS
RSSC =	Regional Social Security Center – there are 54 local RSSCs through which social services are delivered to the population of Armenia
SHA=	State Health Agency
SIC =	State Insurance Commission
SIF =	State Social Insurance Fund, which is administratively independent (but must follow MOSS policy), responsible for collecting payroll contributions and for distributing mandatory insurance benefits including old age, survivor, and disability pensions, and many small social benefits such as childcare benefits to mothers caring for young children, funeral allowances
SRC =	Securities Regulatory Commission

International Entities

DFID=	Department for International Development of UK
EBRD=	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA=	International Development Agency (World Bank)
IMF=	International Monetary Fund
SIDA=	Swedish International Development Agency
TACIS =	Technical Assistance Program for the CIS, administered by the European Union
TNO=	Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research
UNDP =	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF=	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
USAID=	United States Agency for International Development
WFP=	World Food Programme
WHO =	The World Health Organization

C. MAJOR AREAS OF PROGRAM ACTIVITY

C.1 OVERVIEW

The AST's most important counterparts within the Government of Armenia (GOA) – the Ministry of Social Security (MOSS) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) – have moved quickly to create coordinating groups within their respective ministries. MOSS is also moving quickly forward on Personal Identification Number (PIN) system implementation, PAROS transfer, and the creation of the MOSS Information Center, where these functions will be conducted. MOSS, which is charged by the GOA with the responsibility for implementing the PIN system, has created an interministerial committee

Through USAID, bilateral meetings with many donors, as well as counterparts, were organized quickly and effectively. Most Armenian organizations have proved well informed about the AST Program and willing to collaborate. Contacts with the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) were postponed by the replacement of the chairman. However, the AST team has begun discussions on issues related to personified reporting and the development of an actuarial model of the pension fund.

The team has also conducted five local site visits – one to the city of Charentsevan, where the mayor's office has created a housing allowance program and has also developed a comprehensive database of local families. The Charentsevan program, funded through local funds, provides a useful model for ways in which the Family Benefits Program (FBP) could be modified. The second site visit was to Vanadzor, where the team met with several local organizations that have created useful social service outreach, as well as with hospitals and the Marzpet, that are anxious to move forward with facility rationalization in order to close unneeded facilities and create a more family practice based set of services. The team has also visited three local pension offices in both urban and rural sites and an employment office. Accompanied by USAID professionals, project staff toured Ministry of Health facilities, a polyclinic and three community-based sites, in Yeghegnadzor region to become acquainted with the curative and preventive care delivered according to the tiers of MOH services.

There have been several in depth meetings with resident and visiting social sector experts from the World Bank, where concerns over “duplication” between Bank programs and proposed AST activities have been expressed. This issue requires careful negotiation and further meetings to identify how the AST team and WB missions can collaborate most effectively. There is more than enough to do in the area of social sector reform to keep both organizations fully occupied. In general, the AST Program will focus on the detailed aspects of implementation while the WB will focus on broader policy and finance issues.

The AST team has prepared a three-page brochure describing the project's activities that is being reviewed by the mission. The team has found office space and will move in before the end of October. Office equipment – from computers to copiers – should be delivered in late November. Staff hiring is proceeding as the project expands its activities. Registration of PADCO is completed.

C.2 FIRST QUARTER ACTIVITIES

In addition to attending to the basic logistics of mobilizing the new program, the AST team has begun work in several project areas. The table on the following pages summarizes project activities.

AST FIRST QUARTER AND SECOND QUARTER ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Products (Date Completed or Completion expected)</i>	<i>Staff Responsible</i>	<i>Issues</i>
GENERAL PROJECT ACTIVITIES			
1. PADCO Registration	Complete	Movsesian	
2. Office Space	Renovation completed, LAN installed and local telephone lines acquired by Oct 18	Movsesian	
3. Staff Fielding	All RAs except a Public Health specialist are now in place. From October 2000-February 2001, a U.S. consultant is providing temporary coverage until the Public Health post can be filled by a long -term professional. Many local staff either hired or identified	Burgess, PADCO/DC Wittenberg, Abt/DC	
4. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	Draft of comments on USAID M&E SO 3.4 plan prepared Overall project M&E plan will be completed by Nov 15	Vondal, in visit to Armenia from August 28 – September 15 and returned on October 23 to complete work	Further work will be conducted in late October with USAID to review changes in Mission SO 3.4 Monitoring and evaluation plan
5. Project Workplan	Completed by Oct 27	Vaughan, Gillespie, Millslagle, Kearney, Dionne	Preparation of plan delayed pending holding kick-off workshop (see following activity). Many issues still pending because of WB position
6. Kick Off Coordinating Workshop with counterparts and other donors	Held on October 18. Transcript of proceedings will be completed by Nov 15.	All RAs	Several proposed dates proved unworkable, but the final meeting involved major counterparts, USAID, World bank, World Food Programme, UNDP, UNICEF and Dutch consultants.

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7. Preparation of Public Communication Strategy	Draft of strategy to be completed by November 20	Reiser, all RAs	
8. Survey of attitudes, awareness, and self assessment of need	The baseline survey questionnaire will be completed by Nov 6 and pilot tested during late November. Results and analysis will be completed by March 2001. The follow up survey instrument will be developed and tested in May 2001 and conducted every six months starting June 2001.	Grover, all RAs, Harutyunyan and staff from Yerevan State university	The survey will be based on a population panel of about 1,000 families in the five pilot Marzes. The baseline survey in Nov-Dec will collect basic demographic, economic data about families as well as their use of social and health services. The regular survey will collect information about family knowledge of reforms and services as well as changes in circumstances and other data
SOCIAL INSURANCE ACTIVITIES			
9. Review of legal basis for social insurance programs	Review of alternative Pension Reform proposals will be completed by Oct 30. Review of Information and Privacy issues will be completed by Oct 30. Review of legal basis of medical facility and practitioner licensing will be completed by Oct 30.	Nechai Schiffman Local lawyers	Draft Privacy Law viewed by WB and counterparts as necessary precondition for PIN implementation and other social insurance reforms
10. Pension Policy Observational Tour	PADCO submitted for review and comment, outline of proposed tour to USAID Oct 5. .Tour would include 10-11 officials from MOSS, SIF to Estonia and Moscow. .Proposal for visit to Estonia has been developed and preliminary contacts made with Estonian officials. .Tour could be conducted in mid-November.	Nechai, Kearney	Counterparts have little understanding of and agreement over the basics of pension reform. The tour will be an important step toward creating group consensus on some basic parameters.
11. PIN Implementation	PIN Implementation Board established by Minister of MOSS and has submitted formal request to PADCO for material and technical assistance in its implementation. .GOA has committed \$180,000	Vaughan, Dionne	The GOA has adopted an excessively narrow concept for PIN that focuses only on personified reporting for working Armenians. PADCO believes that PINs should be assigned to all Armenians from birth in order to allow efficient administration of social

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	<p>toward the cost of PIN implementation</p> <p>PADCO included as technical advisor to Board, Sept. 25, 2000.</p> <p>PADCO has prepared workplan for support of PIN Implementation Board and system (draft submitted for review and comment to USAID, Oct. 5)</p> <p>PADCO is prepared to provide legal, programming and material assistance to PIN board when needed. It is anticipated that Board will begin work in November.</p>		<p>assistance, medical records and referrals, and other issues. This is the result of their reliance on TACIS report and WB plan. WB (Posarac) acknowledges that broader implementation is desirable "if resources are available." PADCO believes that PIN Board will broaden its approach if material and technical assistance is provided.</p> <p>The serious beginning of PIN implementation depends on creation of MOSS Information Center (see following task) since this center will be the location of the board and its technical implementers. PIN Board needs material and technical assistance</p>
12. MOSS Information Center (to serve as site for PIN department, Monitoring Center, MOSS training facility, and administration of Family Benefit Program	<p>PADCO has prepared workplan for the creation of the center – involving expenditure of \$75,000. Draft submitted to USAID for review and comment, Oct. 5). Will submit final plan for USAID contract approval by Oct. 15, and begin implementation as soon permission has been received.</p> <p>USAID/PADCO visited Charenstevan to view local government perspective on administration of social assistance and use of local databases</p> <p>Workplan on computerization of Civil Status Registry (with Ministry of Justice) is being deliberately slowed at request of Minister of MOSS pending the creation of Information Center</p>	Dionne	<p>Minister Matirosyan regards creation of Information center as his top priority. He fears that if MOSS does not create information center, another Ministry will "steal" PIN function and the key role in coordinating social sector databases.</p> <p>Charentsevan would be a suitable pilot site to test links between MOSS Information Center and local governments. However, the city has not involved RSSC in its activities</p>
13. Framework Law on Social Insurance	<p>PADCO has analyzed the problems in the draft law that was submitted by the GOA to National Assembly but then "frozen" at the request of the World Bank. Since there is a lack of consensus within the GOA about the directions of social insurance, because donors are not coordinated over the appropriate overall strategy, because the draft lacks any fiscal analyses,</p>	Kearney, Vaughan, Schiffman, Nechai	<p>PADCO will submit a formal request to USAID for a contract amendment to allow the delay in work on the "Framework" law and the substitution of work on the Information Privacy Protection Law (see above)</p>

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	and because the GOA lacks the resources to implement large parts of the framework, PADCO believes that work on a replacement draft should be delayed, pending work on the specific components.		
14. Health Insurance	PADCO has met with the contractor for the Dutch Government (TNO) and the WB loan monitors. Pre-requisites for financing a compulsory medical insurance program in Armenia cannot be met at present. Therefore, the Dutch will finalize their advisement on health insurance legislation by close of 2000. It remains for the Dutch firm and ASTP to sort out next steps in proceeding to focus advisement on a broader range of sound financing options than a single solution, such as the government's present skeletal insurance proposal.	Gillespie, Millslagle	PADCO believes that work on health insurance should be delayed until issues such as what services should be provided free, the definition of the Basic Benefits package, and the restructuring of health facilities have been designed and consensus achieved among the institutional stakeholders. The observational tour to Estonia and other ongoing health related activities will address these issues.
15. Personified reporting system for Social Insurance Fund	PADCO is beginning work on design on personified reporting system. Workplan expected by December 2000.	Kearney, Dionne, Mergelyan	SIF anxious to move forward on personified reporting but is not yet aware of all the issues involved in creating the system. It is likely that the implementation of Personified Reporting will be supported by Mergelyan Institute which has already begun work in this area and developed the ARAKS database for the SIF of all pensioners.
16. Other social insurance issues	Detailed analysis of Unemployment benefits awaits the attendance in Armenia of the Swedish SIDA project team members for discussions.	Kearney	The observational tour to Estonia may help build counterpart team and start movement toward consensus on overall social insurance issues. The team is working closely with Helsinki Consulting Group who are contracted on a TACIS "Assistance to Employment Policy" Project.
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES			
17. Transfer of PAROS and Family	Draft workplan for transfer has been developed	Kearney, Dionne,	WB and MOSS believe transfer could be completed

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Benefits Program from Mergelyan to MOSS	collaboratively between PADCO, MOSS and Mergelyan. The draft workplan is to be submitted to USAID (with procurement plan) in second quarter and work under the plan will begin during late November. Workplan and draft contract with Mergelyan will also be submitted to USAID by October 30. Mergelyan staff will be primary implementers and trainers of MOSS staff, under PADCO oversight.	Levitsky	within 3 months. PADCO computer specialists believe transfer can be completed within 6 months (ensuring no interruption in administration of FBS). Software updating (conversion from ACCESS to ORACLE) and other modifications will have to remain the responsibility of Mergelyan
18. Better targeting for the Family Benefits Program	Policy paper on targeting options will be completed by Oct 30. PADCO believes that targeting should allow for progressive benefits and make allowance for housing and utility obligations of recipient families.	Kearney, Melikyan	WB has strong views on how to refine FBS based on per capita family expenditures rather than income – but has not issued clear paper on how those targeting principles would be implemented. Also, WB is completing report based on 1999 Household Income and Expenditure survey that will be used as the basis of targeting. Survey results may be released by NSS by the end of October
19. Appeals system for social assistance recipients	Options paper will be completed by November 30. Pilot program will be tested in 2 or 3 locations in early 2001.	Kearney, Melikyan, Ulbricht	
20. Legal database of all social protection laws	PADCO is preparing draft book on all normative acts related to social protection for publication and distribution through MOSS, MOH, Marzes and RSSCs. Draft to be completed during second quarter Yerevan State University will provide research support and assist in preparing the document. It will be updated quarterly.	Ludmilla Harutyunyan, Kearney, Nechai	The legal database will be prepared in both hard copy and in electronic form It will be updated every six months
21. Office Procedures Manual for social assistance workers	PADCO is preparing draft of an updatable “binder” for publication and distribution through MOSS, MOH,	Ludmilla Harutyunyan,	This will include users guide on Family Benefit software as it is developed by Mergelyan (see task 17

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	Marzes and RSSCs. First version will be pilot tested in January 2001 and available for widespread distribution in April 2001. The manual will be updated by distribution of two-hole punched inserts and replacement pages.	Yerevan State University, Kearney, Dionne, Nechai	above). Yerevan State University will provide research support and assist in preparing the manual. It will be updated as needed
22. Improvement of Household Income and expenditure Survey in National Statistics Service	PADCO has completed workplan. Agreement with NSS expected by November 15 and work will begin in late November. Once approved, the workplan will be the basis for procurement of equipment, its installation, and the beginning of training programs for NSS staff.	Vaughan, Romanyuk, Melikyan	NSS is willing counterpart. But its activities such as regular conduct of annual Household surveys, are held up by chronic lack of operating funds, the impending census, and conduct of special surveys under contract with WB and USAID.
23. Assessment of GOA public education capacity and preparation of public education workplan	PADCO is preparing assessment of MOH and MOSS and local government capacity to conduct public education activities, based on meetings and structured expert interviews. This assessment will be completed by Nov 30. This will be the basis of workplan for public education to be completed by December 31.	Reiser, Harutyunyan, Gillespie, Vaughan, Kearney	One of the initial areas for education of policymakers and public will probably be the implementation of PIN system – explaining its benefits and how confidentiality of databases will be protected
24. Development of social worker training programs	In collaboration with MOSS and Mergelyan, PADCO is designing special training programs to train RSSC administrators and staff in the legal basis for social assistance, the use of computers, the FBS software system (see Task 17 above), and in the appeals system to be developed (see Task 19 above).	Kearney	
HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES (SEE ALSO SOCIAL INSURANCE, ABOVE)			
25. Analysis of current facility and practitioner licensing procedures	PADCO is preparing analysis of legal basis for current practices in licensing of health professionals preparatory to proposing recommendations for reform.	Gillespie, Nechai	

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26. Analysis of legal basis for health facility ownership	PADCO is preparing analysis of legal basis of current ownership of health care facilities preparatory to preparing plan for facility reorganization.	Gillespie, Nechai	
27. Analysis of legal basis for primary health care services	PADCO is preparing analysis of legal basis for the provision of primary care services (November, 2000).	Gillespie, Nechai	
28. Inventory of studies surrounding analysis of the government's health budget and data on informal payments for health care.	PADCO is working with the leadership at both the MOH and the State Health Agency, as well as the pertinent advisers arranged by World Bank and the Netherlands Government, to assemble technical information on the structure, allocation process and distribution of the health budget, the development of the basic benefits package.	Gillespie, Millslagle, local consultants	PADCO staff initiated several rounds of consultations with concerned professionals of the World Bank Offices, from both Yerevan and Washington, D.C., and Dutch technical advisers. Working notions emerged that there are gaps in information-gathering with respect to a modern system's methodology to pursue a sound financing basis for improved services delivery. Tools such as the development of National Health Accounts information may prove useful. All parties affirm commitments to secure complementarity of work.
29. Analysis of information which underpins recent health legislation, passed or pending: -Annual Review of Basic Benefits Package Financed under State Order -Provision of Free Health Care -Concept for Compulsory Medical Insurance -Rationalization of Health Resources (human, financial, material resources)	PADCO is identifying and assembling the background information (feasibility studies, accounting and financial analysis, consultant reports) which underpins key health legislation, passed or pending, pursuing a sound basis for the public financing of health services. The Ministry of Health Coordinating Committee for the ASTP and program staff is compiling analysis of this information for use.	Gillespie, Millslagle, local consultants	Same comment as above; also comment under "Social Insurance Activities: Item No. 12."

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30. Developing information base on the training of providers to deliver Family Medicine-centered services	PADCO engaged a senior profile professor of Family Medicine (USA) to offer a rapid review of the World-Bank-loan-supported training programs to establish a critical mass of physicians being prepared to deliver a type of Family Medicine-centered services. (October 2000)	Gillespie, Soghikian	Leadership of the Family Medicine residency program of the YSU School of Medicine favourably responded to consultations with ASTP staff and consultants. A good basis for programmatic linkages appears likely. Similar links have been slower to develop with the National Institute of Health re-training course leader.
31. Arrangement for coverage of the resident advisor post for Primary Health Care.	A recruitment mobilization, involving identification of 6 potential expatriate and 12 Armenian professional candidates, was conducted (September) in Armenia. Solution for next 4 months is short-term coverage by qualified public health expert to initiate preparations for mobilizing two Family Medicine pilots sites in 2001.	Gillespie, Wittenberg, Millslagle, Tovmasyan	
32. Mobilization of interested parties intending to strengthen the shaping of the reform agenda with the Ministry of Health.	PADCO initiated a continuing series of work sessions with leadership and faculty of the AUA professional schools (Public Health, Public Policy, Business, Law) centered on converging interests in social sector reform promotion and implementation. A full day retreat at AUA on 27.09.00 helped center on ideas such as mobilizing a modest working secretariat to analyze data and produce standard background papers for the MOH decision-making council on timely reform topics; alternate forms of health insurance coverage and rationalization of resources.	Gillespie, Millslagle, Dionne, Reiser	Potential is under examination for the ASTP to broker a multi-resource agency approach, involving MoH, universities, Diaspora agencies and ASTP staff, for the build up of a long-term arrangement among Armenian facilities for training of doctors and nurses in Family Medicine with world-class institutions of higher learning outside of Armenia .
33. Inventorying of national centers in the health sector with centralised databases on key topics of concern to the ASTP.	Within the MOH, the Center for the Analysis of Information functions as the repository of accumulated services production data from nationwide MOH facilities, epidemiological surveillance reporting and statistical reporting on vital events. ASTP plans assessments of this center's current practices and efforts towards serving as the health sector's focal point for data for policy and other forms of sectoral	Gillespie, Dionne, Millslagle, Tovmasyan	Opportunities were explored for complementary programming and technical support in management information systems improvement for the MoH during consultation at USAID/Yerevan mid-October, involving an MIS advisory project of the Canadian International Health Organization (CIDA-financed), the MoH, USAID professionals and ASTP personnel.

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	decision-making (2001). Initial consultations took place involving ASTP and national professionals concerned with human resources information databases at the Professional Licensing Bureau of the National Institute of Health (on-going).		

C.3 SECOND QUARTER PRIORITIES

In addition to beginning the implementation of several major tasks listed in the table above, the AST team will focus on clarifying and coordinating activities with other donors. Of special importance will be defining respective roles with the national-level implementation managers of two sectoral World Bank loan programs, and their designated technical advisors, on major areas including pension reform, financing of health services and restructuring of health services delivery networks at pilot sites. Among the major implementation tasks that will begin in the second quarter are:

- Beginning collaboration with National Statistics Service on Improvements in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey.
- Beginning of the transfer of the PAROS database and administration of the Family Benefits System from Mergelyan Institute to MOSS.
- Creation of an “Information Center” within MOSS to implement PIN, manage Family Benefits Program, manage social protection monitoring, and provide regular training in computers and database management to MOSS and local office staff.
- Development of draft legislative framework and workplan schedule for implementation of PIN system in collaboration with PIN Board.
- Initiation of a targeted profiling of Ministry of Health resources and assessment of services provision, on a phased timetable basis, in promising pilot sites, likely to be in Yerevan City and a rural jurisdiction.
- Mobilization of targeted efforts to support the MOH Coordination Committee for the ASTP in reviewing proposed work plans, technical deliberations on policy recommendations to the MOH leadership.

D. REPORTS AND PAPERS

D.1 FOR COUNTERPARTS

- Agenda for Kick-Off Coordination Meeting
- Plan for observational tour to Estonia and Moscow
- Draft workplan for collaboration with NSS
- Draft workplan for PAROS and FBS Transfer
- Draft plan for creation of Information Center within MOSS
- Draft workplan for support of PIN Implementation Board
- Draft workplan for technical support to the ASTP Committee at the MoH
- Three page project summary

D.2 FOR USAID AND OTHER DONOR ORGANIZATIONS

- Agenda for Kick-Off Coordination Meeting
- Plan for observational tour to Estonia and Moscow
- Draft workplan for collaboration with NSS
- Draft workplan for PAROS and FBS Transfer
- Draft plan for creation of Information Center within MOSS
- Draft workplan for support of PIN Implementation Board